

who passed away on September 14th at the age of 92. I express my deepest condolences to Mayor Christopher's family and to his countless friends.

The city has lost an extraordinary civic leader—one whose grand vision and passion for helping people are vividly remembered by all who knew him.

Although many residents were not yet born during George Christopher's two terms as mayor from 1956 to 1964, the citizens of San Francisco still benefit today from his dynamic and no nonsense leadership. People like to say that San Francisco grew up during his tenure, that he made it a big league city. Indeed, it was George Christopher who brought the then New York Giants to town.

Mayor Christopher changed the way San Francisco looked and the way its citizens looked at themselves. He transformed the City's skyline, built the Japan Center and Candlestick Park, and he modernized downtown. He built San Francisco into a cosmopolitan, world-class city.

The child of Greek immigrants, as mayor he ushered in an era of stronger civil rights consciousness and was a particular hero to San Francisco's Greek community. He was a man of international stature who never lost his close connection to everyday people. Mayor Christopher's life was dedicated to public service, and the San Francisco of today is in many ways a living testament to his achievements both in and out of office.

George Christopher was an exceptional leader who will be greatly missed.●

BYRON CENTER HIGH SCHOOL NAMED 1999-2000 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, in 1982, the United States Department of Education initiated its Blue Ribbon Schools Program. In each year since, the Department has recognized schools throughout the country which excel in all areas of academic leadership, teaching and teacher development, and school curriculum. In other words, Blue Ribbon Schools are recognized because they are the finest public and private secondary schools our Nation has to offer. They are the schools that set the standard for which others strive. I am very proud to report that nine of the 198 Blue Ribbon Schools named by Secretary Richard W. Riley for 1999-2000 are located in the State of Michigan, and I rise today to recognize Byron Center High School in Byron Center, Michigan, one of these nine schools.

Over the past eight years, Byron Center High School has transformed itself from a school rooted in the curriculum of the 1950's to one prepared for the constantly changing information age of the 21st Century. A graduate of Byron

Center is now technologically, academically, and culturally literate. The key to this transformation has been a shift of focus, as administrators stopped tinkering with curriculum and teaching strategies and rather developed a comprehensive restructuring model, which enabled them to more effectively address the entire educational process that Byron Center students are put through.

With the new restructuring model, Byron Center faculty and administrators have focused their efforts on four areas: providing effective guidance to all students by improving and promoting career awareness programs; forming strong partnerships and effective working relationships with local business and community leaders; hiring quality teachers and allowing them to be the leaders in the effort to improve; and constantly monitoring student performance, not only on state and national tests, but also by conducting one year and five year follow up surveys of Byron Center graduates, and collectively employing this information to determine where improvements could occur within Byron Center High School to better prepare students find success in a rapidly changing world.

The success of the transformation can clearly be seen in the new Byron Center High School facility, which students and staff moved into the fall of 1998. Dr. Robert Burt, who visited Byron Center to make the assessment for the Blue Ribbon Award, said that administrators "built the school around a structure of technology," which provided him a "dramatic opportunity to learn about the new age of high schools." Indeed, the facility was designed to support the curriculum, teaching strategies and information technology systems that have played such a vital role in the overwhelmingly successful development of Byron Center High School.

Mr. President, I applaud the students, parents, faculty and administration of Byron Center High School, for I believe this is an award which speaks more to the effort of a united community than it does to the work of a few individuals. With that having been said, I would like to recognize Dr. William Skilling, the Principal of Byron Center High School, whose dedication to making his school one of the finest in our Nation has been instrumental in creating this community. On behalf of the entire United States Senate, I congratulate Byron Center High School on being named a Blue Ribbon School for 1999-2000, and wish the school continued success in the future.●

IN HONOR OF WILLIAM F. ASKEW

● Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President. I rise today to give honor to and remember the life of William F. Askew. Bill

devoted his life to his nation, his family and to delivering the comfort of the Lord's word to the hearts of all those he touched.

Bill enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1942 and served in the Pacific Theater of Operations during World War II. He also served in the Florida National Guard during the Korean Conflict. Bill married Doris Dillman in June, 1946, and together they had 9 children. Bill was the founding pastor of Arlington Heights Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida, for 15 years, before moving to Springfield's Noble Hill Baptist Church where he pastored for the next 26 years. In 1995, Bill retired from the pastorate, but continued to touch the lives of young people with the love of God by serving as the foundations class teacher at New Life Baptist Church.

Bill understood that preaching God's word meant more than speaking from the pulpit on Sunday; it meant action as well. Bill participated in Springfield and area community activities. He served as a longtime member of the Springfield Northside Betterment Association and the Breakfast Club of the Ozarks. He served as General Manager of a 100,000 watt Christian Radio Station, KWFC, in Springfield since it first opened in 1968. And with all these activities, he still found time to be a member of the teaching faculty at Baptist Bible College.

Bill's devotion to the Savior was his most prominent feature and shapes the legacy that he leaves with his 9 children, 34 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.●

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE AIR FORCE

● Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to the United States Air Force as it celebrates its 53rd anniversary. For more than half a century, the men and women of the Air Force, through their dedicated service and sacrifice, have helped to ensure the freedom and security of America and the world.

Although military aviation in this country had its beginnings in the Army, less than four years after the Wright brothers made their historic first flight, it was not until 1947 that the Air Force was established as a separate branch of the armed services.

The birth of the Air Force itself can be traced to 1907, when the Aeronautical Division of the U.S. Army Signal Corps was organized. In 1935, the General Headquarters was established, and the Air Corps gained control of tactical units under General Frank Andrews, after whom Andrews Air Force Base was named. Between the years of 1939 and 1945, this organization was known as the Army Air Force and was led by the legendary General Henry "Hap" Arnold. In March 1942, the Army Air Force became coequal with the